

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF S.B. 647

Co-Chairs Sen. Fonfara and Rep. D'Agostino, and Ranking Members Sen. Witkos and Rep. Cheeseman, and members of the General Law Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S.B. 647. Our names are Ben and Joy Braddock and we're residents of West Hartford and Owners of Hog River Brewing Company in Hartford. I'm writing to you today in support of this legislative proposal, specifically the increase of direct to consumer limits for off-premise consumption at Connecticut breweries, and the exemption for craft breweries from paying an excise tax for on-premise consumption sales. We appreciate the governor for having this as part of his budget proposal.

We've been involved in the CT brewing scene for more than 10 years. Our industry has come a long way and it's exciting to see our potential. To realize our potential, I believe all 3-tiers need to work in harmony to achieve our goals, but some things need to change. In our brew travels we've seen what other states have achieved with a level playing field. It's exciting to think that the local brewing industry can contribute to the growth of CT while attracting new business and tourism. I've seen it first hand in our neighborhood in a short period of time. Joy and I opened HRBC 2.5 years ago and since, our neighborhood is thriving. New businesses are opening, apartments are being built and there is a buzz in Parkville that hasn't been felt since the early 1900s. HRBC is attracting more than 4,000 customers per month to our taproom and brewery, which has afforded us the ability to hire employees, provide health care benefits and slowly grow our business. Removing the DTC limit would level the playing field and allow breweries like ours continued growth which in turn will help us contribute to the prosperity of the State of Connecticut.

The Connecticut craft beer industry is unlike any other, it's a brotherhood and sisterhood where we share one commonality - beer. We are all competitors, yet the comradery between all of us is unparalleled. And, we employ nearly 5,000 people statewide.

We support every single other brewery in our state, from brewing beer collaborations to sharing ingredients, equipment, ideas, and recipes, and assist new breweries as they open and operate. We are supporters of our CT Brewers Guild, our governing association dedicated to protecting and promoting our industry, where we are working cohesively to make this industry better and are assisting with its continual growth.

As our brewery strives to remain competitive in this ever-growing market, it's necessary to modernize our states alcohol laws. Our brewery works/plans to work with our wholesalers, distributors, restaurants and bars, and package stores within our three-tiered system and appreciate our partnerships with them.

The added benefits of increasing direct-to-consumer sales limits for the state of Connecticut are tremendous and It will only continue to add to the massive economic impact that our industry has on

our state, allow our brewery to reinvest in our business, create more jobs, increase our production, and simply sell more of our product.

Increasing the limits on the direct to consumers sales will allow my brewery to compete with breweries in our surrounding states and keep our consumer's purchases and money here in Connecticut.

I would like to thank you all for your efforts in supporting our craft beer industry and hope that you proceed with increasing the limits for direct to consumer sales for off-premise consumption at Connecticut breweries.

Sincerely,
Ben and Joy Braddock
